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ABSTRACT

Data on post-graduation activities of 1974-75 and 1975-76 graduates were independently collected by all 23 Virginia community colleges, using forms developed by the statewide office. Data on 28.2% of 1974-75 and 19% of 1975-76 graduates were not available. Numbers of graduating students increased from 6,051 in 1974-75 to 6,709 in 1975-76. Of 1974-75 graduates, 41.3% were employed, 21.8% transferred to colleges/universities, and 1.6% returned to community colleges; only 3.2% were unemployed. In 1975-76, 49.5% were employed, 19% were enrolled at colleges/universities, 2.8% had returned to community colleges, and 4.2% were unemployed. Only 1.6% of 1974-75 and 2.1% of 1975-76 graduates entered military service after college. Also, very few graduates identified themselves as homemakers. Job-education congruences rose from 34.1% in 1974-75 to 40.4% in 1975-76. Tables present information on graduates' post-graduation activities and post-graduation activities by type of award. Recommendations for future follow-up studies are made, and a copy of the survey form is appended. (TR)

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POST-COLLEGE ACTIVITIES OF VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES 1974-75 AND 1975-76

Research and Reports Office

System Offices, Virginia Community College System

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JC 780 254

INTRODUCTION

The need for reliable state-wide information about the post-graduation activities of former VCCS students is recognized by all community college educators. This information is vital because educational programs in community colleges are designed to prepare students for employment or transfer to senior institutions. The outcomes of the programs, to some extent, can be measured by examining the post-graduation activities of the graduates. In addition, data on graduates are useful in state-wide long-range planning and manpower forecasting.

Most of the Virginia community colleges are conducting each year follow-up studies to obtain information about graduates' post-community college experiences. For sometime now, no effort has been made to aggregate post-graduation data for the entire Virginia Community College System (VCCS). Our last source of comprehensive information was the 1972 state-wide study of former occupational-technical students.[1] Since VCCS educators and planners have expressed strong interest in having current state-wide normative data on graduates' work and educational experiences, the Research and Reports Office staff initiated a project to collect such information from the colleges. The project's purposes, data collection procedures, findings, and a statement about the need to develop a comprehensive VCCS student follow-up/placement system are discussed in succeeding passages.

PURPOSES

The purposes for collecting data on post-graduation activities of 1974-75 and 1975-76 graduates from all twenty-three Virginia community colleges were as follows:

1. To describe the post-college activities of the graduates, by determining the extent of employment, transfer, military service, and other activities for both transfer and occupational-technical graduates.

2. To maximize the use of existing information on post-graduation activities of VCCS graduates by grouping data in a standard format.

3. To provide information on graduates until such time as a VCCS graduate transfer and placement system can be developed.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for the project were provided by the community colleges on the forms developed by the Research and Reports section of the Systems Offices (See

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[1]Eyler, David R. et al. Post College Activities of Former Occupational Technical Students. Virginia Department of Community Colleges, Richmond, Virginia, 1974.

Appendix I). Since the timing and mode of collecting data on post-graduation activities varied from college to college, the data presented in this report are subject to the bias of unevenly scheduled data collection activities. This bias was tolerated because we intended that the project impose no significant data collection efforts on the colleges beyond that which they had planned locally for their graduate surveys.

The post-graduation activities forms allowed the colleges to report data on the graduates by awards (AA, AS, AAS, Diploma, and Certificate). Graduates earning more than one award, had their activities reported for them by their primary awards. For graduates whose post-graduation activities included employment as well as enrollment at a college, a pre-determined criterion was used to report the activity.[2]

After the colleges had submitted the post graduation activities forms, the data were analyzed by the Research and Reports staff. In those instances where discrepancies appeared between the number of graduates as reported by the college on the form and the number that was submitted through the "G" (Graduate) Card, the differences were reconciled between the institutional representatives and the Research and Reports Office staff.

FINDINGS

This section describes the findings on the post-graduation activities of 1974-75 and 1975-76 graduates of the Virginia Community College System. The reader of the report should note that post-graduation activities data were not available on 28.2 percent of 1974-75, and 19 percent of 1975-76 graduates. The major findings are presented in the following sections:

POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES - AN OVERVIEW

The number of students graduating from the Virginia community colleges increased from 6,051 in 1974-75 to 6,709 in 1975-76 (Table I). Of the 1974-75 graduates, 41.3 percent were employed, 21.8 percent transferred to a college/university, and 1.6 percent returned to community colleges. Only a very small fraction (3.2%) of 1974-75 graduates were unemployed.

In 1975-76, about half (49.5%) of the 6,709 graduates were employed. Of those who were pursuing further education, 19 percent were enrolled in a college or university, and more than two percent (2.8%) had returned to community colleges. Slightly over four percent (4.2%) of 1975-76 graduates were unemployed.

Only 98 or 1.6% of 1974-75 graduates and 138 or 2.1% of 1975-76 graduates chose military service as their post-college activity. Also, during the two years studied, few graduates were identified as being homemakers. Job-education congruence, that is the relationship between community college curricula of graduates and their subsequent jobs, rose from 34.1 percent in 1974-75 to 40.4 percent in 1975-76.

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[2]For a graduate of a transfer program, the data were reported only on his status as college/university student; and for a graduate of an occupational-technical program, the data were reported only on his employment status.

Table I

POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATES
1974-75 AND 1975-76 GRADUATES
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Activities	1974-75		1975-76	
	N	%	N	%
Employed In Field or In Related Field*	2,065	34.1%	2,709	40.4%
Employed Out of Field	434	7.2	609	9.1
Transferred to College/University	1,319	21.8	1,272	19.0
Returned to Community College	95	1.6	187	2.8
Military Service	98	1.6	138	2.1
Homemaker	88	1.5	110	1.6
Unemployed	194	3.2	281	4.2
Other	51	0.8	123	1.8
Data Not Available	1707	28.2	1,280	19.0
TOTAL	6,051	100.0%	6,709	100.0%

*Data represent graduates employed in jobs related to their college curricula.

The following tabulation presents the employment status of 1974-75 and 1975-76 graduates.

Employment Status	1974-75 N	1974-75 %	1975-76 N	1975-76 %
Employed in Field or in Related Field				
Full-Time	1,976	95.6	2,593	95.7
Part-Time	89	4.4	116	4.3
Total	2,065	100.0	2,709	100.0
Employed Out of Field				
Full-Time	389	89.6	533	87.5
Part-Time	45	10.4	76	12.5
Total	434	100.0	609	100.0

The tabulation, above, illustrates that of the graduates employed in a field or in a related field, the greatest proportion of them were employed full-time. It is also true that a significant proportion of VCCS graduates who were employed out of their fields of college preparation were working full-time.

The data on graduates who were continuing their education reveal that during 1974-75 and 1975-76 more than 90 percent of community college transfer graduates were enrolled as full-time students in four-year colleges and universities. See the tabulation below. The number of graduates who returned to community colleges as full-time students dropped from 90 percent (90.6%) to 70 percent (70.6%) during the two years studied.

Transfer Status	1974-75 N	1974-75 %	1975-76 N	1975-76 %
Transfer to College/ University				
Full-Time	1,204	91.2	1,158	91.0
Part-Time	115	8.8	114	9.0
Total	1,319	100.0	1,272	100.0
Returned to Community College				
Full-Time	86	90.5	132	70.6
Part-Time	9	9.5	55	29.4
Total	95	100.0	187	100.0

Although the number of transfers to college/university slightly declined during these two years, the number of graduates who returned to community colleges increased considerably from 95 in 1974-75 to 187 in 1975-76 -- an increase of about 97 percent.

POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES BY TYPE OF AWARD

In examining the post-graduation activities, we note that for both years studied, more than 50 percent of college transfer (AA and AS) graduates transferred

Table 2

POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATES BY TYPE OF AWARD
1974-75 GRADUATES
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Activities	Associate of Arts		Associate of Science		Associate of Applied Science		Diploma		Certificate		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed In Field or In Related Field*	4	1.8%	140	8.0%	1,369	46.2%	92	62.2%	460	47.6%	2,065	34.1%
Employed Out of Field	10	4.4	71	4.1	258	8.7	16	10.8	79	8.2	434	7.2
Transferred to College/University	138	61.1	889	50.9	269	9.1	4	2.7	19	2.0	1,319	21.8
Returned to Community College	3	1.3	11	0.6	33	1.1	8	5.4	40	4.1	95	1.6
Military Service	0	0	63	3.6	27	0.9	0	0	8	0.8	98	1.6
Homemaker	8	3.5	2	0.1	32	1.1	0	0	46	4.8	88	1.5
Unemployed	1	0.4	10	0.6	120	4.0	6	4.1	57	5.9	194	3.2
Other	6	2.7	17	1.0	2	0.1	0	0	26	2.7	51	0.8
Data Not Available	56	24.8	544	31.1	853	28.8	22	14.8	232	23.9	1,707	28.2
TOTAL	226	100.0%	1,747	100.0%	2,963	100.0%	148	100.0%	967	100.0%	6,051	100.0%

*Data represent graduates employed in jobs related to their college curricula.

Table 3

POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATES BY TYPE OF AWARD
1975-76 GRADUATES
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Activities	Associate of Arts		Associate of Science		Associate of Applied Science		Diploma		Certificate		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed In Field or In Related Field*	18	7.9%	181	10.8%	1,816	52.2%	98	62.4%	596	50.7%	2,709	40.4%
Employed Out of Field	37	16.3	155	9.3	286	8.2	23	14.6	108	9.2	609	9.1
Transferred to College/University	108	47.6	790	47.3	338	9.7	11	7.0	25	2.1	1,272	19.0
Returned to Community College	10	4.4	45	2.7	46	1.3	6	3.8	80	6.8	187	2.8
Military Service	0	0	75	4.5	55	1.6	0	0	8	0.7	138	2.1
Homemaker	17	7.5	31	1.9	45	1.3	0	0	17	1.4	110	1.6
Unemployed	4	1.8	36	2.2	158	4.5	5	3.2	78	6.6	281	4.2
Other	1	0.4	10	0.6	45	1.3	1	0.6	66	5.6	123	1.8
Data Not Available	32	14.1	348	20.7	689	19.9	13	8.4	198	16.9	1,280	19.0
TOTAL	227	100.0%	1,671	100.0%	3,478	100.0%	157	100.0%	1,176	100.0%	6,709	100.0%

*Data represent graduates employed in jobs related to their college curricula.

to a college/university or returned to a community college (Tables2 and 3). On the other hand, more than 50 percent of the graduates from the occupational-technical programs (AAS, Diploma, and Certificate) were employed. These findings establish a high degree of congruency between graduates' job activities and their community college curricula.

Tables 2 and 3 show that diploma recipients, in proportions greater than other occupational-technical graduates, were employed in jobs not related to their college curricula -- 10.8% in 1974-75 and 14.6% in 1975-76. The number of certificate graduates who returned to a community college doubled from 40 graduates in 1974-75 to 80 in 1975-76. In regard to unemployment among occupational-technical graduates by the type of award, the data indicate that 4 to 6 percent of them were unemployed each year.

The data also show that the proportion of employed AA graduates increased significantly from 6.2 percent to 24.2 percent during the two-year period. For both years, the percentage of AA graduates employed in field or in related field was more than twice of those employed out of field. When we examine the employment status of AS graduates, the data reveal that ratio of graduates employed in field or in related field to those employed out of field declined from two-to-one to almost one-to-one during the two years studied.

This report has presented findings on the post-graduation activities of VCCS graduates of 1974-75 and 1975-76. The reader should exercise care in drawing far-reaching conclusions based on these findings since the follow-up studies on graduates are still in developmental stages at several Virginia community colleges.

RECOMMENDATION

As stated earlier, the need for accurate state-wide information about the post-graduation activities of our graduates is critical. Not only is this information vital for evaluation and long-range planning of educational programs, but it is also necessary for accountability purposes. Accordingly, we recommend that a comprehensive follow-up system be developed and implemented so we may obtain information on the post-college activities and perceptions of former students. Such a system should have the following objectives:

1. To assess annually the post-college activities of graduates and build toward a five-year longitudinal study. There is definite need for accurate information on post-graduation activities of our graduates. The research project should be designed to gather information on graduates' (1) employment activities related to types of employment, location of employment, and current salary; (2) educational activities after leaving the community college; and (3) relationship between graduates' post-college activities and their community college education and training. The five-year longitudinal follow-up studies on the graduates would provide information on the types of student post-college activities, migration patterns, and relationships between students' college curricula and their career mobility.

2. To study the patterns of students' retention and withdrawal. Since a large proportion of community college students leave the college before graduation, it is extremely important to investigate the reasons for their withdrawal and to identify their post-college activities. Comparative analyses should be conducted between the responses of those who completed their program (graduates) and those who did not. Such an assessment would be related to selected personal and demographic characteristics of the two groups.

3. To study the attitudes of former students toward their community college experiences. Former students should be asked to assess their community college experiences in a number of ways. Specifically, the students should be asked to evaluate college services in the areas of instruction, facilities, social activities, college environment, and counseling and placement services. Also, an assessment of educational/occupational goals and factor(s) that influenced students to enroll in a community college should be included in the research study.

The establishment of the VCCS follow-up/placement system, suggested above, will provide meaningful data to evaluate educational program outcomes as related to objectives. With the limited available resources, it will not be feasible to initiate a system-wide research project encompassing all aforementioned objectives simultaneously. Plans are now underway to implement a state-wide Graduate Placement and Transfer System in fall, 1978. The System will collect information as described in Objective I on all VCCS graduates. Once this system is successfully implemented, other phases of the follow-up research project will be undertaken to seek information on perceptions of former students and post-college activities of nonreturning students.

cfj
10/13/77

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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APPENDIX I: POST-GRADUATION ACTIVITY FORM
1974-75/1975-76 GRADUATES

We need data on the post-graduation activities of 1974-75/1975-76 transfer and occupational-technical graduates from your college. Using the format shown below, indicate the number of graduates pursuing each of the activities listed.

	AA	AS	AAS	Diploma	Certificate	Total
Employed In Field or In Related Field*						
Full-time						
Part-time						
Total						
Employed Out of Field						
Full-time						
Part-time						
Total						
Transferred to College/University						
Full-time						
Part-time						
Total						
Returned to Community College						
Full-time						
Part-time						
Total						
Military Service						
Homemaker						
Unemployed						
Other						
Data not available						
Total						

College _____

Date of Data Collection _____

Person Submitting Data _____

*Data should represent graduates who are employed in jobs related to their college curricu

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